

Hobbies

Reference work helps collectors appraise coin collections

By Roger Boye

Here are answers to more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

Q—We own 1,250 foreign coins, some made in the early 1800s. How much should we expect to pay to have the collection appraised? Would you give us the name of someone who could do the work?

H. J., Chicago

A—Most coin dealers will evaluate small numbers of coins at no cost. For a large hoard, a dealer probably would charge you either a percentage of the total appraised value (perhaps 3 to 7 percent) or an hourly rate. If you then decide to sell your coins to the dealer, the appraisal fee usually is waived.

I don't recommend the names of specific coin dealers nor do I act as a go-between for people wanting to buy or sell old coins. For names and addresses of dealers in your neighborhood, check the Yellow Pages of the telephone book (under "coin dealers") or the advertisements in the Sunday Tribune.



The \$50 American Eagle Bullion Coin is now worth \$390.

Incidentally, with the proper reference, such as "Standard Catalog of World Coins" by Chester L. Krause and Clifford Mishler, you could do a rough appraisal on your own.

Q—The gold American Eagle carries a face value of \$50, yet the one-ounce coin costs \$390 (as of early August). If the price of gold drops to \$35 an ounce, as it did during the Depression, would I still get at least \$50 for

bullion coins for investors who want a convenient way to own gold and silver.

Q—The "P" and "D" mint marks on my Washington quarters appear to be in somewhat different locations. For example, the "P" is almost at the rim on one 1984 quarter and next to Washington on another quarter. What gives?

B. M., Elgin

A—Slight variations in the location of mint marks is normal, because until recently technicians added the letter to coin dies by hand. That operation also has re-

sulted in many less common mint-mark types, such as a "D" over "S" (on some 1938 Indian-head nickels) and a "micro S" (on some 1945 dimes).

Hand-added mint marks were last used on proof-coin dies in 1984, and they are being phased out this year on dies used to make circulating coinage.



Questions about coins or paper money? Send your queries to Roger Boye, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60611. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

the coin? Could I use it to buy at least \$50 worth of merchandise if I needed money in an emergency?

M. P. G., Berwyn

A—The coin you describe is legal tender for \$50 and would be honored as such by the banking system. Of course, you wouldn't want to "cash in" the coin because you could sell it to a coin dealer for so much more. Uncle Sam produces American Eagle